

NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

PRE-COMPETITION MEALS

Wrestlers may not often think about pre-competition meals because of early morning weigh-ins. After they have "made weight," they often eat anything that is available and worry about the consequences later! By following these guidelines and those in "EATING HEALTHY EVERY DAY" wrestlers will find it easier to fuel their performance and control their weight.

Here are some basic guidelines for eating before competition.

Avoid foods high in salt as they cause water to leave the muscles where it is needed it to aid performance.

Drink at least two, 8-ounce glasses of water with your meal.

Eat 3 - 4 hours before competing.

Eat familiar foods that will not cause indigestion.

Eat foods that are high in carbohydrate and low in fat and protein.

Keep the pre-competition meal small.

Food ideas for after weigh-in:

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water

Bagels, English muffins, or toast topped with peanut butter and jelly or fruit

Cold or hot cereal with low-fat milk

Fresh fruit

Fruit juice

Low-fat yogurt

Pancakes topped with fruit

Waffles topped with fruit & low-fat whipped topping

Ideas for pre-competition meals:

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water

Baked potato topped with salsa or other low-fat topping

Bread, muffins, rolls topped with honey, jam or other low-fat topping

Broiled fish

Cooked vegetables

Fresh or canned fruit

Fruit juice, unsweetened

Lettuce salad with low-fat dressing

Low-fat milk

Pasta without meat sauce

Rice, white or brown

Skinless, white chicken or turkey

Any breakfast ideas are also excellent choices for pre-game.

POST-COMPETITION MEALS

It normally takes your body 24 - 72 hours (1-3 days) to convert complex carbohydrates into useable forms of energy. ***Eating a high carbohydrate meal 15-30 minutes after exercise, and definitely within 1 hour after exercise, can reduce the amount of time needed to convert carbohydrates into useable glycogen to as little as 12 hours (½ day).***

Foods and drinks to consider as post-competition, or post-practice, snacks are:

Bananas
Fresh fruit
Fruit juices
Oranges
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
Sports drinks
Carnation Instant Breakfast

If an athlete chooses to drink only fluids immediately after exercise, a high carbohydrate sports drink, may be the best choice. These drinks are not high protein "weight gainers," but high carbohydrate supplements. A high carbohydrate meal should be consumed within two hours of competition.

Following competition, avoid foods high in fat and sodium as both will cause weight gain over the next few days due to water retention.

Sources: Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; The PreCompetition Meal, U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division, 1993; "Meals and the Timing of Competition," Stamford, Bryant, The Physician and Sports Medicine, date unknown; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996.

Special thanks to Molly Pelzer, RD, LD from Dairy Council for providing ideas and reviewing this material.

11/97

NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

ALL-DAY TOURNAMENT NUTRITION

During all-day tournaments it is important to stay energized throughout the entire day without feeling "weighted down." That necessitates athletes "grazing" throughout the day by eating, and drinking, small amounts frequently. It is extremely important for athletes to drink an adequate amount of fluids during a tournament. Energy and fluid needs can be met by drinking juices and sports drinks. Energy needs can also be met by eating easily digested foods that are also high in complex carbohydrates.

Time period between events:

Best foods to eat:

1 hour, or less

Water or sports drinks containing no more than 70 calories per 8 ounce serving.

1 - 2 hours

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes.

2 - 3 hours

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes, bagel, whole-wheat bread with jam, muffin.

3 - 4 hours

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes, bagel, whole-wheat bread with jam, muffin, bread with peanut butter or cheese, bowl of cereal with skim milk, low fat yogurt.

4 hours, or more

Any of the above, or lean meat sandwich, or pre-competition meal.

ALL-DAY TOURNAMENT FOODS SHOULD BE HIGH IN CARBOHYDRATES AND LOW IN FAT AND PROTEIN.

Examples of foods to eat at a tournament include:

Animal crackers
Bagels with jam
Bagels
Breads
Fresh fruit
Fruit bread
Fruit bars (ie. Fig Newtons)
Graham crackers
Juices
Low-fat fruit bars
Low-fat yogurt.
Low-fat pudding cups
Muffins
Oatmeal cookies
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
Pretzels
Popcorn, air-popped
Sports drinks
String cheese
Turkey sandwiches with low-fat mayonnaise

Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996.

Special thanks to Molly Pelzer, RD, LD from Dairy Council for providing ideas and reviewing this material.

11/97

NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

ENERGY FOR IMPROVED WRESTLING PERFORMANCE

There is nothing a wrestler can eat between the time of weigh-in and his first match to compensate for a poor diet and drastic weight loss during the days before a match. The handout titled, "*Nutrition Ideas for Wrestlers: Eating Healthy Every Day*," contains ideas about what wrestlers should be eating on a daily basis to keep their energy levels high. The key to having adequate energy to wrestle effectively is to eat a healthy, balanced diet every day.

Between the time of weigh-in and competition it is extremely important for wrestlers to drink water, a sports drink, fruit juice, or vegetable juice. Recent research has shown drinking fluids as little as 30-60 minutes before exercise will improve performance.

Here are some ideas of what wrestlers could eat and drink between the time of weigh-in and competition. Those wrestlers who will wrestle within 60 minutes after weighing in should limit their intake to fluids, probably sports drinks and water.

apple
apple juice
banana
grapes
orange
orange juice

peaches
pears.
sports drink
vegetable juice
water
yogurt, sweetened

It is also important for wrestlers to eat high carbohydrate foods which will quickly replace the energy used during practice or competition. Within 15 - 30 minutes after practice, or a match, wrestlers need to eat to replenish their fuel supply.

Examples of foods to eat immediately after exercise are:

angel food cake
bagels
bananas
carrots
Cheerios*, with low-fat milk
corn bread or muffins
Corn Flakes*, with low-fat milk
graham crackers
Grape Nut Flakes*, with low-fat milk
grapes
low-fat, fruit yogurt

pretzels, especially low sodium
raisins
rice cakes
Rice Krispies*, with low-fat milk
Shredded Wheat*, with low-fat milk
sports drinks, especially high carbohydrate
(These may cause stomach upset if one is not used to drinking them.)
watermelon
wheat cracker
white rice

orange juice
pineapple or pineapple juice
potatoes; baked, instant, or mashed

white or wheat bread with honey

* = brand name product

By eating these same foods between matches during a tournament, wrestlers can keep their energy levels high throughout the day.

Especially after practice or competition, avoid foods high in fat and salt. Both of these will cause weight gain over the next few days due to water retention.

It is also very important for wrestlers to drink plenty of water during and after workouts, and during tournaments. **Lack of water reduces physical and mental performance much more quickly than lack of food.** Drinking during the day at school, before workouts, during and after workouts, and during tournaments will help prevent wrestlers from becoming dehydrated.

Sources: "Taking It To the Mat: The Wrestler's Guide to Optimal Performance," The Center for Nutrition in Sport and Human Performance, University of Massachusetts, 1999; Training and Conditioning, "A New Facet in Performance Nutrition," Morgan, Tracy, CSCS; Gatorade Sports Science Exchange, "Glycemic Index and Exercise Metabolism," Volume 10, 1997.

11/99